

The Powerful King

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- [0 : 0 0] Well, I heard this story of a couple who owned an exclusive jewellery store in Australia. And one day the wife was attending the shop and her husband was out.
- And in came a couple who were looking to buy a pink argyle diamond that they had in their store. And it was worth around 20,000 Australian dollars.
- But as the credit card transaction was being made, the shop's computer froze. And so the customer leant over the counter and he looked at the computer and he made some suggestions.
- And then the woman did what he said and then the computer worked again and he was able to buy his diamond. And the woman said to him, oh, you know a bit about computers, do you?
- And he said, yeah, I know a little bit about computers. And so the customer then was happy. He took his diamond and then he left the store. Then the woman's husband came back, the owner of the jewellery store, and the woman said to him what had happened.
- [1 : 0 1] And she said that they'd sold this pink argyle diamond to an American who was in their store. And so he was intrigued to find out who this person was, who was so wealthy that he could just come in and buy a 20,000 Australian dollar diamond.
- And so he discovered when he looked back through the transaction records that the man who bought the diamond was Mr. Bill Gates. That would be Mr. Bill Gates, the CEO of Microsoft at the time.
- And so the woman felt a bit silly for saying, you know a bit about computers, do you? Because at the time, Microsoft, owned by Bill Gates, was really setting the agenda for the computer industry worldwide.
- And basically the point is she failed to recognize his true identity. She didn't realize who he was. And that's exactly what people do when it comes to Jesus Christ. They fail to recognize who Jesus is.
- Or they've never looked at Jesus closely enough that they've got his identity right. And they get his identity wrong. And it's a problem if we mistake Jesus' identity.
- [2 : 1 2] It's a problem because we won't respond to Jesus as we should. And so what Mark wants to do is introduce Jesus to us. And so that's exactly what he does at the beginning of his gospel, the gospel of Mark.
- Mark chapter 1, verse 1. He says, the beginning of the good news about Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God. And so, get this, if we fail to recognize who Jesus really is, then we make the biggest mistake of our lives.
- And we make the mistake because we won't respond to him as we should. And that's why Mark is determined not just to tell us the identity of Jesus, but to prove who Jesus is through all the things that he says and the things that he does.
- And you will notice from our reading that that's the focus of this chapter in Mark's gospel. It's the focus of the early chapters. Mark is saying to us, this is who Jesus is. Look at what he says and look at what he does.

Don't get his identity wrong. And so Mark's style, his customary style is quick, rapid fire episodes. And what he does here is he weaves these episodes together with hardly any comment on any of them to show us who Jesus is.

[3 : 25] Because whenever Jesus is present, so too is God's power and God's authority to work in this world. And so through these episodes we see three things.

We see the power of Jesus. We see the priority of Jesus. And we see the purpose of Jesus. Three points. The first one's the longest. The second one's the shortest. The third one's the best.

The power of Jesus, the priority of Jesus, and the purpose of Jesus. So, first of all, the power of Jesus. What we see is the power and authority of Jesus to teach.

The power and authority of Jesus to heal over sickness. And the power and authority of Jesus over evil spirits. So let's look at these. The power and authority of Jesus to teach.

This is in verse 21 and 22 and 27. So we see this in the first episode. Verse 21. Then they went to Capernaum. And when the Sabbath came, Jesus went into the synagogue and began to teach.

[4 : 26] The people were amazed at his teaching because he taught them as one who had authority, not as the teachers of the law. So Jesus taught with authority. As soon as he walked into the synagogue and opened his mouth, people were amazed at what Jesus was saying.

Now the teachers of the law, they never spoke like Jesus. They were the formally trained experts in God's law. But since God was present in Jesus, Jesus had an authority that transcended everything that they said.

And so people were amazed. Verse 27. The people were all so amazed that they asked each other, who is this? A new teaching and with authority.

So Mark makes it clear that the people were all so amazed. Everybody was amazed. Jesus just needed to say something and it happened.

So he ordered this evil spirit to come out of a man and the evil spirit obeyed him. And so there was no one in the synagogue that day that failed to be impressed by Jesus because he taught with power and authority.

[5 : 38] Mark doesn't tell us what he taught, but how it impacted those who were listening. So Jesus had authority to teach. Next we see that Jesus had power and authority over evil spirits.

We see this in verse 23 to 27 and then 34 and 39. So evil spirits or unclean spirits as it is in the original sounds a bit weird.

So what's Mark talking about here? Well, the kingdom of God coming in Jesus, coming near in Jesus means that it brought Jesus into sharp conflict with Satan.

And these evil spirits, Satan and his work. And because Jesus came to defeat Satan, the devil, and the kingdom of darkness, there is this battle between Jesus and the devil.

And it's an ongoing battle and it happens all the way through the ministry of Jesus as Mark records that for us. And so here's this confrontation in the synagogue, verse 23 to 26.

[6 : 44] Just then a man in the synagogue who was possessed by an impure spirit cried out, What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us?

I know who you are, the Holy One of God. Be quiet, Jesus said, sorry, Jesus said, Jesus sternly. Come out of him. The impure spirit shook the man violently and came out of him with a shriek.

So notice something significant. This impure spirit recognises who Jesus really is. It gets the identity of Jesus right. And it trembles in fear at being in the presence of the Holy One of God.

So it knows Jesus has power over it. Because with the coming of Jesus into this world, the reality for Satan and his demons is that their time is coming to an end soon.

They are going to be defeated and ultimately destroyed. Their days are numbered. And so Jesus rebukes the spirit and effortlessly casts it out of the man.

[7 : 52] Now only God could do this. A normal human being wouldn't be able to do this. And so Jesus is showing his power over the kingdom of Satan as he establishes the kingdom of God in this world.

And so if we see just down in verse 34, Jesus healed many with various diseases. He also drove out many demons. But he would not let the demons speak because they knew who he was.

Why does Jesus not allow the demons to speak? After all, they're the ones who seem to know the true identity of Jesus. Yet what Jesus does is he silences them because their confession about him would mislead people.

And so what Mark is saying here is that this revelation of who Jesus is is coming in stages. And it would only ultimately be understood in the light of Jesus' death on the cross.

Which is where the story of Jesus is heading through the Gospel of Mark. And so all these rapid fire incidents aren't just revealing the identity of Jesus for us.

[9 : 02] But they're showing us that their writing is on the wall for Satan, the devil. Because Jesus has authority over him and over his kingdom. And Jesus came to rescue people under the power and the authority and the rule of Satan.

He came to deliver. So power and authority to teach. Power and authority over evil spirits. And then power and authority over sickness.

As we had this passage read, lots of people were healed in these episodes. And so there's Simon Peter's mother-in-law.

Verse 30 and 31. Simon's mother-in-law was in bed with a fever. And they immediately told Jesus about her. So he went to her, took her hand and helped her up. The fever left her and she began to wait on them.

So just a touch from Jesus and the fever is gone. So simple and yet so significant. Because this miraculous healing doesn't just show Jesus' authority and power over sickness.

[10 : 10] But it shows his compassion for people. For ordinary people. Because this particular healing leads to many more healings. So verse 32 and 34.

So just picture this. The whole town is standing outside the door. Waiting for Jesus to heal everybody. Everybody wants an appointment with Jesus.

And these healings are revealing to us the identity of Jesus and what he came to do. Because all through the Old Testament part of the Bible.

The bit before we read today. God is the one who heals people of all their diseases. We sang earlier from Psalm 103. Early on in that Psalm.

In the first bit we sang. It speaks of the Lord. Meaning God. He's the one who forgives all your sins. And heals all your diseases. And so what's going on here is.

[11 : 09] That Jesus is performing the kinds of healings that only God could do. So his authority to heal every sickness and every disease is confirming his identity as God's chosen king.

All of these healings are telling us who Jesus is. And so it's hardly surprising that after Jesus announces in Mark chapter 1 verse 15.

That the time has come. The kingdom of God has come near. It's hardly surprising that as the kingdom of God comes near in the person of Jesus. That we've got all of these miraculous healings.

And so the exercise of Jesus' authority over sickness is really a foretaste of things to come. It's a foretaste of the restoration of all things and all people.

Through Jesus' life, death and resurrection. And so what we're seeing here is a preview of the future. When the kingdom of God will come in all its fullness.

[12 : 16] And everything wrong will be put right. That's what we're being told here about Jesus. There will be a time when there will be no more pain. No more sickness. No more disease.

And no more death. Because Jesus has come as the powerful king. God's son to sort this mess out. And of course we don't see this yet.

We still live in a world full of suffering and pain and death. But in what Jesus says and in what Jesus does. This great reversal and restoration and putting things right has already started.

And that gives us hope for the future. When the future looks bleak and it looks as if things are a mess. This world is broken and fractured. And it's just getting worse.

The coming of Jesus promises the future is bright. Because he's come to sort things out. And so what we see here. The reign of God in this world is seen in the person of Jesus.

[13 : 19] And what he does. And what he says. And so Mark here is basically stacking up all the evidence. To bolster his claim that Jesus is the son of God.

That Jesus is the Messiah. He is God's chosen one. Now today we live in an age where lots of people are just confused about Jesus Christ. And don't have a clue about who he is.

Or what he came to do. Part of my week is spent as a chaplain to a football club in Glasgow. And many of the people that I come into contact with just have no clue about Jesus.

And it's not their fault. It's just that nobody has ever told them. No coward. The English playwright was once asked, What do you think about God? To which he replied, He said, We've never been properly introduced.

What Mark is doing is introducing us to the person of Jesus. Who he is. And why he matters. He wants to introduce us to Jesus.

[14 : 24] So that we don't get Jesus' identity wrong. Because in Jesus Christ we are looking at God in human form.

And through his recorded life for us here, We can't make the excuse that Jesus hasn't been properly introduced to us.

Because he has. So that's the first thing. The power of Jesus. Second is the priority of Jesus. And the priority of Jesus we see here is two things.

It's prayer and it's preaching. So first of all, prayer. Look at verse 35 to 37. So amidst all of this power and authority of Jesus, In all of these episodes, The priority of prayer is highlighted in verse 35.

Very early in the morning, While it was still dark, Jesus got up, Left the house, And went off to a solitary place where he prayed. Simon and his companions went to look for him.

[15 : 24] And when they found him, They exclaimed, Everyone is looking for you. So just think, A busy day for Jesus, His public ministry, Many healings, Exercising many demons, And yet Jesus is up early the next morning.

And what's he doing? He's praying to his father. Spending deliberate time with his father, God. And so when Peter gets up and he pulls back the curtains, And he sees all these crowds of people gathering, Outside his mother-in-law's house, Then what happens?

Well, Jesus isn't there. And so they're concerned. What's going on? Well, Jesus was the biggest celebrity in Galilee at the time.

He had the power to heal. And there were people needing to be healed. He had the power to cast out demons. And there were people who needed to be released from demons. And yet, Jesus sees prayer as a higher priority.

He didn't allow time with his father to be squeezed out, Despite all the obvious needs around him. And so Jesus goes off to this solitary place to pray.

[16 : 37] It's interesting that the word that we have translated as solitary, There in verse 35, Is the exact same word for wilderness, In verse 12 of Mark chapter 1.

And that's where Jesus went, Because of the need for prayer and communion with his father. He needed to be in an uninhabited, Remote, Desolate, Solitary, Wilderness, Place.

And so if Jesus needed to pray, Then how much more do we? So prayer was a priority for Jesus, But so too was preaching.

Because Jesus also makes it clear that he came to preach. So, look at verse 38 and 39. Jesus replied, Let us go somewhere else to the nearby villages, So that I can preach there also.

That is why I have come. So he travelled throughout Galilee, Preaching in their synagogues, And driving out demons. Preaching was the priority in the public ministry of Jesus.

[17 : 44] So he wants to go around these villages to preach, Because he says that's why he came. And so it's interesting to note that while people were struck by the supernatural power of Jesus, Which drew these large crowds, Jesus told people that he'd healed, Not to tell anyone.

So the man with leprosy, Verse 43 and 44. He doesn't want them to go and tell what's happened. So why is this?

Well because Jesus didn't just want people to see his miracles, But to hear his message, To hear his preaching. Because people are always going to be more amazed by miracles, That you can see, Than with a message that you can hear.

For example, Just say that today, In this place, We had some amazing supernatural miracles going on. Like people being raised from the dead, Or blind people being able to see, Lame people being able to walk.

I don't know, Whatever supernatural miracle you can think of. Just say it happened here today, Then I guess, Next Sunday, We'd probably have more than, I don't know, 50 people. A lot more people.

[18 : 58] And why would people be here, Next Sunday, If we had miracles this Sunday? Would it be here to hear God speak, Through preaching, And teaching?

I kind of doubt it. They'd be here to see the miracles, To see what was going on. And yet, Jesus never wanted to put on a show, To entertain people.

Yes, He was performing miracles, Because the kingdom of God, Had come near in him. And he was beginning this process, Of restoring all things. But the miracles, Could so easily have distracted people, From hearing his message.

Because the response, That Jesus wanted from people, From his ministry, Was repentance, And belief, Which is back in chapter 1, Verse 14, And 15.

And that's why, The first thing that Jesus does, In the gospel of Mark, Is to call people, To repent, And believe. Even before he does any miracles, He calls people to repent, And believe.

[20 : 04] Because repentance, Comes through hearing, And belief, Comes through, Hearing the good news. People often say today, I would believe in Jesus, If I could see some miracles, If I got some evidence, Before my very eyes, Then I would believe.

Sure I would. It would be much easier. Well not really. Because Jesus taught with authority, So that his listeners, Whether then or now, Might hear what he says, Turn from their sin, Repent, Believe in him, And follow him.

So that's the priority of Jesus, It's to pray, And to preach, This message, That transforms, People's lives. And thirdly, The purpose of Jesus, First, The power of Jesus, Second, The priority of Jesus, Thirdly, The purpose of Jesus.

And we get a glimpse of this, In this last episode, Verse 40 to 45, About Jesus making this leper, Clean. So, Just read with me, Verse 40, A man with leprosy came to him, And begged him on his knees, If you're willing, You can make me clean.

Jesus was indignant, He reached out his hand, And touched the man, I am willing, He said, Be clean. Immediately, The leprosy left him, And he was cleansed.

[21 : 26] Now leprosy, Was a dreaded skin disease, People suffering from leprosy, Were basically living corpses, And leprosy made a person, Ritually unclean, According to the Old Testament law, And it also made a person, Socially unclean, And there were few, Things more terrible, Than being declared, Unclean, In those days, Because, If you were unclean, You had to live in lonely, Exclusion, Isolation, Away from everybody else, Away from the community, Away from people, And so this man, Wouldn't have been allowed, In the temple, Because there were people there, In fact he wouldn't be allowed, In any kind of social gathering, Whatsoever, He had to keep his distance, From people, Because he was unclean, If he came into contact, With anyone, Then he would make them, Unclean too, And so leprosy, As well as the terrible pain, And suffering that it caused, The person, It also cut you off,

From everybody, And everything, And so this leper, Was basically, An outcast, And what he does is, He comes and he begs Jesus, Falling on his knees, And says, If you're willing, You can make me clean, Of course he wanted to be free, From the pain of his disease, As well as the stigma, That came attached to it, And this leper, Takes this, Huge risk, By even approaching Jesus, Because remember, He was supposed to stay, Away from people, But he was so desperate, That he was prepared, To break the law, To break, Social custom, In this last gasp effort, To be clean, To be healed, And yet, Jesus' response, To the leper, Is no less, Scandalous, Than the leper's audacity, In approaching him, Because Jesus, Just think, Jesus could have healed, We've seen what he's done already, He could have healed this leper, Just by saying a word, But instead, See how he heals him,

He heals him, By touching him, He deliberately reaches out, And he touches this, Unclean man, Why does he do that? Well we read that Jesus was, Indignant, Verse 41, Or, Some manuscripts say, Jesus was filled with compassion, If Jesus was indignant, Or he was angry, It was with this, Terrible disease, That was spoiling, This man's life, A man, Made in the image of God, A man loved by God, Who was broken, By what was going on, In his body, But the strength, Of Jesus' feeling, For this man's, Desperate plight, Meant that Jesus, Was prepared to touch him, Despite this being, A violation, Of the laws of ritual purity, That are recorded, In the Old Testament, And so by touching this man, Jesus was saying, That he was prepared, To become unclean, So that the leper, Could become clean, And that's exactly, What happened, Jesus touched,

This man, And restored him physically, And therefore, Restored him socially, He could be part, Of the community, Of God's people again, And again, This is only something, That God could do, And so, The story here, Is underlining, Underlining, Jesus' power, And his authority, Over sickness, And over disease, But it's doing something more, It's revealing to us, Part of the purpose, Of Jesus coming, Because did you see, How this episode ends, In verse 45, Instead, He went out, And began to talk freely, Spreading the news, As a result, Jesus could no longer, Enter a town openly, But stayed outside, In lonely places, Yet, The people still came, To him from, Everywhere, So here's the leper, He ignores, Jesus' command, And he goes around, And he spreads his story, With everybody, And as a result, Jesus could no longer, Openly enter into, A town, And so what happens to Jesus,

Where does he end up? He ends up outside, In lonely places, So Jesus and the leper, Had changed places, They'd swapped, The leper goes, Into the city, From being on the outside, Jesus goes outside, From being inside, And it's a great picture, Of the purpose of, Jesus, It's showing us, What Jesus came, To do, That Jesus came, For those, Who are unclean, So that he could, Make them clean, And none of us, None of us, Are clean before God, You know your own heart, Better than I do, We know what's going on, Inside of us, And there's plenty in there, That means that a perfect, Holy, And righteous God, Would never accept us, As we are, Because we are, Unclean, Our thoughts, Our words, Our actions, And so it means,

[26 : 32] That none of us, Can ever, Get near God, None of us, Can ever, Approach God, Because we are, Unclean, Because of the sin, In our hearts, And lives, And so Jesus came, To cleanse us, To cleanse us, By taking our, Uncleaness, On himself, As he died, On a cross, And so Jesus, Chose to, Identify with us, That's why he became, A human, He identified with us, In his life, So he could take, On our sickness, In his death, And so it's through, His death, That we become, Clean, From our sin, And therefore, Acceptable, To God, So Jesus was, Excluded, From the presence of God, So that we, Could be included, Jesus willingly, Became, Unclean, For us, So that we might, Be clean, So our, Uncleaness, Goes on him, As he died, On the cross, And we are clean, Forever,

Through faith, In him, The apostle Paul, Puts it this way, In 2nd Corinthians, Chapter 5, Verse 21, He says, God made him, Who had no sin, Be sin, For us, So that in him, We might become, The righteousness of God, Again, It's that swap, Or that switch, Or that substitution, Jesus became sin, For us, So that we might, Become righteous, His righteousness, Swapped for, Our sinfulness, So that we might, Be accepted, By God, So as we close, We can see in these verses, The power of Jesus, The priority of Jesus, And the purpose of Jesus, We're meant to see, That Jesus is the powerful king, Who came into this world, To bring us, You and me, Back to the God, Who made us, And so every word, Every exorcism, Every touch, Every move, Everything Jesus does, And says, Is revealing to us, Why he came, Because in Jesus, We see how God,

Is restoring, The world, And he is reversing, The effects of sin, In these people's lives, Back then, But also in our lives, Now, So Jesus' life, In the gospel of Mark, Is moving towards the cross, Where he would, Willingly, Give up his power, In order to die, For us, And that's why, We can't get Jesus, Wrong, So see who he is, And see why, He came, Because he is the one, Our world needs, And he is the one, That I need, And the one that you, Need too, He is the king, And he always will be the king, Who came to restore, Our world, And rescue, Our lives, And so the question, As we close is, Is Jesus, Your king, He is the king, It's a fact, But is he, Your king, In other words, Have you bowed, To him, As king, And put your trust,

In him, And gone to him, To be free, To be forgiven, To be restored, To a right relationship, With God.